



LOCATION: SCHOOL HANDBOOK, SECTION I, DOCUMENT 32

PUPIL VOICE

Date policy first adopted: November 2016

Date reviewed: November 2023

Reviewed By: Lynne Barnes

Date ratified by Governing Body: n/a

Date of next review: Autumn 2025

Rationale:

All pupils have the right to be active participants in their own education and to feel that their opinions will be heard in the wider school community.

At Abbey Court School, we actively seek ways to listen to the views of our pupils and give them opportunities to be involved in decision-making so that they can engage as partners in the life of the school. We firmly believe that this will form the basis for them to make a positive contribution to the school environment and our ethos.

We encourage pupils to become active participants in a democratic society, by holding a range of activities which develop skills that underpin their right to have an opinion, make a choice, and communicate these effectively.

We believe that pupil voice directly contributes to achievement. Pupils benefit from increased confidence, communication skills, identity, self-respect and respect for the views of others, an improved sense of responsibility and ownership, and engagement with learning.

We believe that all pupils have the right to a voice and this directly correlates with the School's safeguarding policy. At Abbey Court, we emphasise teaching pupils to feel confident, and have the means to express their feelings and talk about themselves with regard to their own safety. This is a skill that is worked on from the Early Years throughout the school so that the pupils can have greater autonomy over themselves when in the school and wider community.

Student voice and pupil participation activities at Abbey Court

There is a wide range of approaches that we use and continue to develop to support pupil participation and promote student voice:

- Pupil Voice meetings focus on three topics per year, with opportunities for the pupils to plan, action, review outcomes and evaluate with their peers. They share their views directly with the Leadership Group, who in turn respond with a 'You said, we did' response.
- Enterprise education: Pupils are encouraged to consider and develop their understanding of working to a budget, making a profit and participating in market research activities and opportunities to develop their confidence in order to express individual opinions and extend an awareness of a democratic society.

- Pupils are consulted with decisions that affect their learning and well-being by setting their own target on the Individual Education Plan (pupil-initiated target) each term.
- Pupils actively participate in their Annual Reviews by working with their Teacher to prepare their reviews with photographs that demonstrate their learning, interests and progress.
- Pupils complete a Pupil Voice survey where they can have a say about their school, likes and dislikes; activities and interests they would like to find out more about, and improvements that they would like to be made. This also has a page dedicated to the issues discussed at the pupil focus groups so that every pupil has their say and is heard.
- Pupils are given options to be involved in local or national campaigns or organisations where they represent their peers, such as Youth Parliament, and will actively decide whether to be involved.

Curriculum

We believe in embedding pupil voice into the curriculum, with teaching and learning activities being used to enable pupils to focus on how to make informed decisions about their lives, their health and well-being, and the environment, their friendships, community and their future. Watching programmes such as Newsround gives them daily opportunities to understand what is going on both nationally and locally and to discuss and explore their thoughts and feelings. Extra-curricular activities, give pupils scope to explore issues that go beyond academic subjects: These include residential events/journeys, stay-to-tea or pupil-run café events, camp days, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions, Scouts, Young Farmers, and educational visits within their local community as well as further afield to London or local Theatres. Pupil voice is embedded and integral in our commitment to UNICEF's Rights Respecting Schools Award and the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Mark.

We are committed to promoting pupil voice through the International School's Award. This gives our pupils and young people a window into different cultures and countries, helping them develop as responsible global citizens and preparing them for life in a global society. Through the International School's projects, pupils are able to express their views and opinions in an ever-changing world and feel as though they make a positive contribution.

Pupil Voice meetings

We believe that our pupil voice meetings enable pupils to enhance and influence positive peer relationships and leadership, as well as mutual responsibility throughout the school.

Pupil Voice meetings will:

- Be a positive forum
- Provide an opportunity for all pupils to be heard
- Provide a forum for the leadership of the school to listen to pupil's opinions and how they apply their knowledge.
- Aid communication throughout the school
- Build the pupil's confidence and self-esteem
- Encourage the pupils to be active citizens
- Provide the pupils with a democratic model

These focused meetings will also be used to assist the school with its self-evaluation procedures and enable us to be more accountable to the whole school community.

Pupil voice in response to National and Global issues

As a community, we recognise that National and Global issues can impact and disrupt our everyday lives. This can have a lasting impact on some pupils, causing them anxiety, misunderstanding, anger and frustration about missing school and their friends. Through a carefully planned PSHE and Citizenship curriculum we are encouraging pupils to use their voice in order to express their feelings and anxieties and support them with these through a personalised response to each individual.

Related documents:

Pupil Voice Survey

Pupil Voice booklet